

N^o 16

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED before the

Right Hon. the LORD-MAYOR,

WILLIAM M^{THE} MAYOR,

Court of ALDERMEN, the SHERIFFS,

AND

The LIVERIES of the several Companies

OF THE

CITY of L O N D O N,

AT THE

Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,

ON

Thursday, JANUARY 30th, 1752,

BEING THE

ANNIVERSARY FAST

Appointed to be observed for the

MARTYRDOM of King CHARLES the First.

By CORNELIUS MURDIN, A. M. Curate of All-
hallows Barking, and Lecturer of St. Mary-Hill.

L O N D O N :

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Street.

S E R M O N

WINTERBOTTOM, MAYOR.

Tuesday the 4th Day of February, 1752, and in the
Twenty-fifth Year of the Reign of King GEORGE II.
of Great Britain, &c.

IT is Ordered, that the Thanks of this Court be given to
the Reverend Mr. Murdin, for his Sermon preached
before this Court, and the Liveryes of the several Companies
of this City, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, on
Thursday the 30th of January last, being the Anniversary
Fast for the Martyrdom of King CHARLES the First, and
that he be desired to print the same.

M A N.



here, and upon the Testimony of Historians; and as
what suits the best with a Person not well qualified

for the purpose of this

and Happiness of any Nation, in order to prevent

the like Troubles for the future

It was the wish of Kings who give us the lesson

of my Text, and from a Neglect of the Maxim

the Spirit of God, pronounced, like a true Patriot, that

Religion is the foundation of a Nation's Welfare

In general we are too apt to think that Kings and good

Policy are Things of an irreconcilable Nature, and the

of a good Man and a good Patriot are two different

But from these things it will be seen that

As a Patriot, I am sensible of the

of a State, and of the

of a Nation, and of the

of a People, and of the

of a Country, and of the

of a World, and of the

of a Universe, and of the

of a God, and of the

of a Soul, and of the

of a Body, and of the

of a Mind, and of the

of a Spirit, and of the

of a Nature, and of the

of a Substance, and of the

of a Form, and of the

of a Matter, and of the

of a Power, and of the

of a Will, and of the

of a Reason, and of the

of a Understanding, and of the

of a Knowledge, and of the

of a Wisdom, and of the

PROV. CHAP. XIV. VER. 34.

Righteousness exalteth a Nation:

WE are met here as good Citizens, and as
good Subjects, to deplore the Calamities
of this Day's Tragedy; and therefore I
hope it will not be improper, to let you see, after the
Desolation brought upon us, from a *Neglect* of the Maxim
of my Text, how far an *Observation* of it will conduce to
the Happiness and Prosperity of any People. That which
most concerns us in this Day's Event, is, I apprehend,
not so much to shew how far the *Troubles* of those Times
may be supposed to have taken their Rise from a Neglect
of all *Religious* Principles, (which I would rather take
for granted, resting upon the Authority that brings us

here, and upon the Testimony of Historians; and as what suits the best with a Person not well qualified for Enquiries of this Sort,) as to point out how far *Righteousness* or *Religion* is adapted to promote the Glory and Happiness of any Nation, in order to prevent the like Troubles for the *future*.

'Twas the wisest of Kings, who gives us the Lesson of my Text; and from an enlarged Experience, aided by the Spirit of God, pronounces, like a true Patriot, that *Religion* is the only sure Stability of a Nation's Welfare. In general we are too apt to think, that *Religion* and good Policy are Things of an irreconcilable Nature, and that a good Man and a good Patriot are two different Persons: But from *Solomon* we may learn how to unite (and may they never be separated) these two Characters. As a Politician and a King, he seems to speak of the exalting and aggrandizing of his Country, as the Duty of a Statesman; but like a truly wise Man, who sees thro' the Vanity of all other Means, he confines himself to *that* which alone will procure any lasting Happiness to it. It is as if he said, " though there are several indirect ways of giving a little *transient Prosperity* to a Nation, yet to consider Society under a *general View*, independent of particular Circumstances, there are none so *certain*

tain of attaining the Good proposed, as an Observation of the Laws of Religion.

We are in this Nation raised to some Degree of Eminence ; but I cannot flatter my Countrymen so far as to say that it is, altogether by the Practice of Religion. 'Tis not, therefore, *your* Elogium that I intend in the following *Discourse*, but to call upon you to meditate upon the means here set out by *Solomon*, and too much overlooked by the present Generation, for *preserving* and *encreasing* your Prosperity. And I am persuaded, that while I am endeavouring *this Way* to contribute to the *Glory* of a Nation, I am *falling* in with the Views of that *wise* Prince now on the *Throne*, who has so very lately renewed his Declarations of the *Importance* of Religion to the Welfare of his Subjects.

But when we assert that *Righteousness*, or Religion, *exalteth a Nation*, we would be understood to mean the Religion of *Jesus*, a *Faith* working by *Love*, the *Power* of Christ's Death applied to the Soul for the *Forgiveness of Sins*, and *afterwards manifesting* itself in all the various Duties of social Life. We do not conceive of *Religion* as many are apt to do. We are ready to acknowledge, and would to God, it was more

more universally acknowledged, that neither the Religion of the *Persecutor*, nor the Religion of the *Superstitious*, nor the Religion of the *Hypocrite* does any Way contribute to the real Good of Nations.

Will the Religion of the *Persecutor* any ways contribute to this End? A Religion but too well known for the Repose of *Europe*! Men of this Sort, under the Pretext of Zeal for the Truth, give Way to every fierce unmerciful Humour. They arm themselves with the secular Sword, to destroy whatever opposes their Systems; supply by Violence, what is wanting in Demonstrations, and after the Example of *Mahomet*, would establish the Gospel by Force and constraint. A Character this, as I observed, but too well known for the Repose of *Europe*, and but too often felt in these Kingdoms, where Numbers of our Countrymen have fallen the Victims to this fierce ungovernable Zeal. No, 'tis not such a Religion which can exalt a Nation. Such a Religion, on the contrary, depopulates Kingdoms, ruins Commerce, is the fruitful Source of Civil Wars, and intestine Commotions. The Religion which we would be supposed to recommend, is a Religion like its Author, gentle, patient, friendly: A Religion, whose distinguishing Characters are *Forbearance*, brotherly Love, *Charity*; a Religion, which, having a strong Aver-

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tion to *Error and Heresy*, yet takes pity on *him* that errs; a *Religion*, which is not at all *slack* in rooting out *false Doctrines*, but still leaves a *Liberty*, to misguided Consciences, to follow them; a *Religion* which has no other *Sword*, but that of the *Spirit*, nor any other *Hammer*, but that of the *Word*.

2dly. Will the *Religion* of the *Superstitious* advance the *Welfare* of *Society*? It will make *Devotion* degenerate into *Form and Ceremony*; it will encrease the *Number* of *Ecclesiasticks*, beyond all *Proportion*, and thus make burdensome a great many *Members* of *Society*, who would otherwise have contributed, in all *Probability*, to the real *Service* thereof. It would cast a *Gloom* over the *Mind*, and damp the *Spirit* of those great *Geniuses*, whom *Providence* frequently raises up for the *Preservation* of a *State*. It would put the *Priest* in the *Place* of the *Potentate*, and the *Potentate* in the *Place* of the *Priest*; the *Priest* on the *Throne*, and the *Potentate* at his *Feet*. No, my *Brethren*, this is not the *Religion* we stand up for. The *Religion* of *Jesus* is opposite to *Superstition*, it is *just, solid*; it wills no less that "we should render to *Cæsar* the *Things* that are *Cæsar's*, than to *God* the *Things* that are *God's*." If it prescribes *Bounds* to the *Sovereign*, it no less gives to all other *Ranks* and *Orders* of *Men*, *Theirs*. Much less,

3dly,

3dly, Will the Religion of the *Hypocrite* contribute to the Welfare of a Nation? An *Hypocrite* has an Head filled with his own Interest; which a specious Shew of Religion seems to be a likely a Way of procuring; and therefore under that venerable Name, (if he aims high) he opens a Way to the Houses of the *Great*, and tries to infuse into them the same Spirit. He carries on the basest Designs under the Appearance of Meekness and Sanctity; he talks always of *Grievances* and *Reformation*, and cajoles all Parties, 'till he has brought them into his Designs. He never stops till he has accomplished his End, which is to rise upon the *Ruin* and Distractions of publick *Affairs*. If any would like to see an *Original* of this Kind, we would refer them to *Oliver Cromwell*, and to the Confusion of those Times, for the *Usefulness* of such a Religion to the Community. No, the Religion which exalts a Nation, is *derived* from the *Treasures* of Divine Wisdom, has been formed in the Counsels of that *Spirit*, a Portion of whose Wisdom is communicated to the Sons of Men, and may be known by its genuine Fruits of *Righteousness*, *Peace*, *Long-suffering*, *Gentleness*, *Goodness*, instead of that *Headiness*, *Turbulency*, and *Impatience* of Spirit, which is generally the Result of the Counsels of Men, who know not God.

Thus

Thus by describing such a *Religion* as I do not mean, I have endeavoured to point out such a *Religion* as I do mean, which I now intend to apply to the main Business of this Discourse, which is to shew the Usefulness of Religion to Society.

And here, were we to take a View of *Society* in general, and consider the *Motives* which induced Men to form themselves at first into *Bodies* and *Communities*, for their mutual Convenience, we shall find that Religion is the surest and truest Way to answer those Ends. Man in himself, and in his natural State, has Wants without End, and but limited Faculties for supplying them. Every particular Man stands in need of Light for his Guidance, Rules for his Conduct, Remedies for his Health, Support for his Weakness, Food for his Nourishment, Cloaths and Lodging to defend him from the Injury of the Air. We might easily swell this Catalogue; but from this short imperfect Sketch, we can't help seeing that one common Interest has given Men the Thought of one common Design. Diverse Men have assembled together into one Place, that the Industry of many might supply the Defects of each. This gave the Rise to Societies and publick Bodies of Men.

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Now, it is easy to perceive, that in Order to reap the Fruits which Each must propose to himself from this assembling together, it was *necessary* that they should follow *inviolably certain* Maxims. It was necessary that the different Members of this Body should look upon themselves as naturally *equal*, in order to be led by that Principle of *mutual Succour*. It was necessary that they should be *sincere* one towards the other, that *Fraud* and *Subtilty* might not *carry on* Designs *prejudicial* to the common Interest. It was necessary that they follow the Rules of an exact Equity, in order to their observing the *Convention* which it might be prudent to enter into for their common Benefit. It was necessary that *Love* and *Charity* should lend their Aid to strict *Justice*; that the *Happiness* of Many should prevail over the *Interests* of Few: and that on Occasions where it was necessary to decide between publick and *private Interest*, the *Community* was always to have the Preference before *private* Persons, with many other Particulars of the same Sort. Now, what is more adapted to the making us observe these Rules, than *Righteousness* or *Religion*? *Religion* makes us best acquainted with our *natural* Equality; It tells us that we have all the *same Original*, the *same God* our *Creator*, the *same Man* for our *first Parent*, the *same Misery* derived upon us all, and the *same common Grave* to receive us. *Religion* requires that we

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be *sincere* one towards another ; that our *Tongue* be the faithful Interpreter of our Thoughts ; that “ we speak every one the Truth to his Neighbour,” being under the Eyes of the God of *Truth*. Religion binds it upon the Conscience, that we be just in rendring to every one their *Dues*, “ *Tribute* to whom *Tribute* is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour ;” that “ we do to others as we should be willing to have done to ourselves.” Religion wills that *Charity* animate all our Actions ; that we should look upon each other as Creatures of the *same God*, as *Subjects* of the *same King*, as *Members* of the *same Body*, as *Heirs* together of the *same Glory*. Religion further ordains, that *private* Interest should always give way to *publick* ; that every Man seek not his own Things only, “ but those Things which concern others also ;” and that “ he be ready to lay down his Life for the Brethren.” Look we then upon Religion in this *primitive* Light, we must quickly perceive, that this *alone* will exalt and sustain a Nation.

And that this is not a mere *speculative Notion*, and Matter of *Theory* only, let us apply it to some *particular* Forms of Government now actually existing. As Mankind encreased and grew into larger Bodies, it was impracticable upon pressing Occasions, that every Member of the *Society* could be called upon to give in his

Suffrage. Wherefore, by a Sort of *Compact*, and from the *Necessity* of the Thing, it was so *ordered*, that some *particular* Persons were to be *singled out*, who should be looked upon as the *Voice*, the *Decision*, and *grand Movers* of all the rest. Some have *thought* it best to remit the supreme Power into the Hands of one *single* Person, and some into the Hands of *more*, as the *Exigencies* of *particular Countries*, or the various Judgment of Men, in an Affair of such Importance, seemed to determine. From some such Motives as these, I say, Societies have thought fit to confer upon *one or more* Personages their *Authority*, their *Privileges*: They have entrusted them with the Power of prescribing Laws, imposing *Tribute*, levying Subsidies, declaring *Peace* or *War*, recompensing Virtue, punishing Vice, and in short, of providing whatever was useful and necessary for that Society, over which they were appointed for Good.

If we were to run over the several Forms of Government, we should find that each Nation under its own Form, would be *more or less* happy, would *more or less* prevent the *Inconveniencies* to which it is subject, according as it *more or less* shews an Attachment for Righteousness or Religion. But to pass by the *Inconveniencies* of other Forms of Government, in which we are not so much *concerned*, let us look a little into our *own*, and consider the *Inconveniencies* which a mixed

mixed *Monarchy*, such as ours, is liable to, and how well calculated Religion is for remedying them. Now in what Cases will the supreme *Power* under such a Government as ours be *fatal* to the Community? When the *Prince*, instead of having the *Good* of his People as an inviolable Rule of Government, shall think proper to follow his mere Will and Caprice. When he shall think himself raised to the supreme Power for his own particular *Glory*, and not for the *Welfare* of his People; when stretching his *Authority* beyond just Bounds, he would domineer over the *Life* and Fortune of his Subjects; when to gratify his own particular Prejudices, he would introduce a *Religion* contrary to the Consciences, and hateful to the Minds of the generality of his People; when he would impose exorbitant Taxes and Subsidies upon his People, of his own proper *Authority*, and without the Consent of the other Branches of the Legislature. In a Word, when he has such an *Idea* of *Royalty*, as to make it consist in doing whatever is *Right* in his own Eyes; and when instead of being the *Father*, and *Protector* of his People; he affects to be their *Tyrant* and *Oppressor*. Such are the Inconveniencies of the *first* Kind. On the other Hand, the Mischiefs arising from the People's getting too great an Ascendant, and prosecuting their Rights in an illegal unconstitutional Manner, are no less *dangerous* and *fatal* to the Publick. When

When under Pretence of supposed or real *Grievances* in their Governors, they form Cabals, and set on foot all Sorts of Intrigues to distress their Prince : When a seditious Multitude, spirited up by some designing Chief, are determined to overturn all Order and good Government, in order to rise upon its Ruins : In a Word, when the *Liberty* of the People degenerates into *Anarchy* and *Licentiousness*, then *popular Ambition* becomes as dangerous as *Tyranny* itself. A melancholy Instance of this Truth we have in the History of those Times, which we are now more particularly called upon to consider. The Prince then upon the *Throne*, though in his own natural Disposition, one of the best Princes that ever filled it ; yet, what through the Instigation and *Advice* of some about him, and what through the high Notions of the *regal* Prerogative, which had been instilled into him in the Reign of his Royal Father, it must be owned had been prevailed upon to do some Things, with a View of extending his *Prerogative*, in the first fifteen Years of his Reign, which did not seem altogether to agree with the Constitutional Rights of *English* Subjects. And had his Subjects prosecuted their Rights in a legal and constitutional Manner only ; or could they have been content with a legal *Recovery* of them, they had done nothing they could have been fairly condemned for. But instead of that, when the King had confirmed

confirmed to them all their legal Privileges, nay had agreed to yield up to them some of the undoubted Prerogatives of the Crown, he found that no reasonable Concessions would ever be able to satisfy them; that their Intent was now levelled against the Constitution itself; that nothing less would satisfy them than an utter Subversion of that Government, both in Church and State, which was by Law established.

It would be unnecessary to suppose, that all who at first engaged in Opposition to the Measures of the Ministry, in the former Part of this Reign, had any Designs of carrying Things to the horrid Lengths that they were at last carried to. It ought to be remembered, that some even of the hottest Opponents to the Court-Measures at first, when they saw through the Designs of several that were joined in the Opposition along with them, dropp'd their Opposition, and upon an Establishment of their Privileges, joined their lawful Sovereign, with a laudable Intent of spending their Fortunes, or even their Blood, in the Maintenance of his Rights, as they had been before ready to do the same in the just Maintenance of their own. But how unfortunately they fell short of effecting, what was so laudably intended by them, the melancholy Catastrophe of this Day's Tragedy, was but too fatal an Instance of. — Too fatal an Instance indeed

indeed of the many Mischiefs arising from the popular Branch of our Government getting too great an Ascendant, when besides making this Nation, for a long Time, a Field of Civil War and Confusion, *Barricide* at length completed the Scene, even that of shedding the Blood of their lawful Sovereign, together with the utter Subversion of the Laws of their Country.

Now is it necessary to prove to you, that the best Fence which could have been opposed to these Disorders was Religion? Does not *each* call into his Mind some *Maxims*, taken from our Scriptures, which, if *duly* and *heartily*, not *hypocritically* professed, would have served as an effectual Check against all these Excesses? Does not the least Acquaintance with the true Spirit of the Gospel, preclude a Number of Quotations upon this Occasion? And may not every one, even from this *particular* Instance, learn this *general* Truth, that whatever be the particular Form of Government, belonging to each Nation, 'tis Religion alone which can supply the Defects and *Inconveniencies* of each; 'tis *that* which can exalt a Nation, by pointing out the only sure Way of keeping up *that* *Ballance* among all Parties, the Want of which, on either Side, must be highly prejudicial to its Welfare, and if carried to any

any Length, unavoidably end in its Ruin and Destruction.

Let us now stand still, and reflect a little upon the *Genius* of that *Religion*, which, if scrupulously observed could not fail of procuring the greatest *Advantages* to its sincere Professors. Let the *Sovereign*, the *Magistrate*, the *Subject* declare, if they can find any thing here, which tends in the *least* to lessen that *Love* and *Confidence*, they should have in each other: On the contrary, if they do not find every *thing* that tends to *advance* and strengthen it. Yes, ye *Sovereigns*, ye *Guardians* of the *Publick*, drive us from among you, as *Disturbers* of the common *Repose*, as the *Pests* of *Society*, if the *Religion* we preach is fatal to *Government*; if it is not equally calculated to *regulate* the *Bounds* of the *Sovereign's* *Power* and that of the *People's* *Submission*. Had the *Rules* of this *Religion* been observed in the unhappy *Times* we have been describing, the *Honour* of this *Nation* had never been stained, by the *Blood* of their *lawful Prince*, and yet the *Rights* and *Privileges* of free-born *Englishmen* had been transmitted safe to us their *Posterity*, And we their *Posterity*, and our *Descendants* after us, by keeping close to the *Doctrines* of our *Faith*, may learn to maintain our native *Freedom*s and *Privileges*, should they ever

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happen to be invaded; and yet avoid the horrid Confusion which our Forefathers introduced into these Kingdoms, by their Disregard and Contempt of all Laws human and divine. For any one therefore to go about weakening the *Proofs*; *raising of Difficulties*; rejoicing in finding out what they think a *Feeble* in a Religion, which is no less the *Glory* of the Sovereign, than the *Safety* of the People, is the most execrable Disposition, the most injurious to *publick Good*, and the most worthy of the publick Indignation that can well be imagined. Far be all such Dispositions from us. Let these Considerations, which this *Discourse* has suggested, keep you constantly attached to the *Christian Religion*; may you look upon it as the richest Present which can come from Heaven. May we use all the Strength of our *Armies*, all the Power of our *Credit*, all the *Penetration* we are capable of, to maintain it, as by Law established, in these Kingdoms. May we shew the *Force* of it ourselves, by our Submission to the Laws of Jesus Christ, our *supreme Lawgiver*, and to the *Powers* that govern under him; by our Application to bring up our Children in the *Knowledge* of those *Truths* which Religion lays before us, and in *Obedience* to those *Maxims* which it prescribes. For supposing our Country to be at any Time in imminent Danger, what does it avail, to send our *Fleets*, if they are loaded with

with Reprobates, vomiting out *Blasphemies* against Heaven? What does it avail to levy *Armies*, if those who compose them, have already declared *War* against the Lord of Hosts? What does it *avail* to put forth Laws of *Civil Policy*, if the Laws of *Religion* are trod under Foot; if the Sabbaths are *violated*, if the solemn Assemblies are *profaned*? What does it avail making *Alliances*, if we are not first *reconciled* to God? In short, What does it avail that we are good *Politicians*, if we are bad *Christians*? May God therefore inspire the Inhabitants of this Land with *Piety*, with *Equity*, with all religious Dispositions, as the only true Way of bringing on an *Affection* to our Country, to our *Sovereign*, as the only sure Way of diverting the *Dangers* which may at any Time threaten our Liberties, our Estates, our Families; as the safest Course which can be taken for perpetuating amongst us all the *Felicities* of that *Peace*, which is the Work of *Righteousness*, the Effect whereof is *Quietness* and Assurance for ever.

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with Reprobates, vomiting out Blasphemies against Heaven? What does it avail to levy Armies, if those who compose them, have already declared War against the Lord of Hosts? What does it avail to put forth Laws of Civil Power, if the Laws of Religion are trod under Foot? If the Sabbaths are violated, if the solemn Assemblies are profaned? What does it avail making Almanacs, if we are not first returned to God? In short, What does it avail that we are good Politicians, if we are bad Christians? May God therefore inspire the Indignities of this Land with Piety, with Equity, with all religious Dispositions, as the only true Way of bringing on an Affliction to our Country, to our Ruin, as the only true Way of diverting the Downfall which may at any time threaten our Liberties, our Estates, our Families, our latest Courts which can be taken for perpetuity, though we all the while live in the Work of Righteousness, the Effect whereof is Peace and Assurance for ever.

F I W I E